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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

SILAS MARNER

A Drama in Four Acts

Adapted from George Eliot's Novel

By
FRANKLIN S. OWEN

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1915

SILAS MARNER

CHARACTERS

SILAS MARNER, *a weaver.*
WILLIAM DANE, *his bosom friend.*
A VILLAGE DOCTOR *at Lantern Yard.*
FIRST VISITOR.
SECOND VISITOR.
THIRD VISITOR.
REV. MR. PASTON, *Minister at Lantern Yard.*
FIRST VESTRYMAN
SECOND VESTRYMAN.
THIRD VESTRYMAN.
SQUIRE CASS.
GODFREY CASS } *sons of Squire Cass.*
DUNSTAN CASS }
SOLOMON MACEY, *Raveloe Parish Clerk.*
JEM RODNEY, *a common poacher.*
REV. MR. CRACKENTHORPE, *Minister at Raveloe.*
AARON WINTHROP.
AARON WINTHROP, *sixteen years later.*
DOCTOR KIMBLE.
MRS. CRACKENTHORPE.
NANCY LAMMETER, *afterward Mrs. Godfrey Cass.*
MRS. DOLLY WINTHROP.
EPPIE, *foster-daughter of Silas Marner.*
Guests, servants, etc.



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Silas Marner

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A room in the DEACON's home, plainly furnished. There is a fireplace, an old bureau with several drawers, an old table of the same sort, and other plain furniture. Seated about are two or three friends ; the DOCTOR is busy setting medicines in order.*

Enter FIRST VISITOR, R.

FIRST VISITOR. How is the Deacon to-night ? (*Sits.*)

DOC. He is low, brother, very low. He can't be any worse and come out of it alive. But let us hope for the best. There ! he moans again ; I must look to my patient. (*Peers into adjoining room ; comes again to VISITORS.*) The man moans and groans more than is good for him. If you could assure him that the church money is safe, it would relieve his mind of a great weight. (*Steps to bureau ; locks drawer, but leaves key in place.*) There, he need worry no longer. The money is safe. But who is to watch to-night, brothers ?

SECOND VISITOR. I believe it is William Dane and Silas Marner.

THIRD VISITOR. The money could be in no safer hands.

DOC. Aye, it is so. What a splendid example of friendship those two young men are ! They are like unto brothers. Where one goes the other follows. They are like unto David and Jonathan.

THIRD VISITOR. Ha ! here is Master William now !

Enter WILLIAM DANE, R.

DOC. Good-evening, Brother William ; how fares it with you ? But where is your Brother Marner ? How is it he is not with you ?

WILL. Is he not here yet ? He promised he would be here when the clock struck eight. But he has time yet. You won-

der why we are inseparable? He is like a brother to me. He helps me when I am in trouble, cheers me when I am low-spirited. What more could I ask of a friend?

DOC. Verily you have a friend in him. But listen! do I not hear his footsteps?

Enter SILAS MARNER, R.

WILL. Aye, it is he! Ah, Master Marner, you would not keep your friend Jonathan long, I thought. I can always depend upon you, Silas.

SILAS. Even as I can always depend upon you, William.

FIRST VISITOR. Well, we must be on our way, friends.

SECOND VISITOR. Let us hope for better news to-morrow, Doctor. Good-evening, Master Marner; good-night, Brother William.

[Exeunt VISITORS, R.]

DOC. I, too, must bid you good-night, friends. Watch carefully to-night. If the Deacon wakes give him one of those powders there on the table. If he grows very nervous send for me. The money, you know, is there in the bureau. Guard it carefully. It would break the old man's heart to have it taken. But I must go. Good-night and good luck. *[Exit, R.]*

SILAS. Well, William, I—— (DEACON *groans*. SILAS *hastens to door of adjoining room*.) Aye, Deacon, I am here. I will watch with you till one. Then Brother William Dane will take my place. Yes, yes, I'll watch the money carefully. Yes, yes, now try to sleep.

(WILL. is testing his pipe which refuses to draw.)

WILL. Have you your knife handy, Silas? I lost mine last Whitsuntide. (SILAS *hands him knife*. WILL. *clears pipe and puts knife in his own pocket*.) I must be off soon. I'm sorry to leave you alone. But I'll relieve you at one. Good-night, good brother.

(Exit, R. SILAS paces floor, talking.)

SILAS. William is a friend indeed! I wish I might be more like him! I am a poor, weak creature. I have a strange infirmity that comes over me without warning. Wouldn't it be terrible if I should be seized by one of those strange visitations in my silent watch here with this sick Deacon?—But what have I to fear? My friend William knows my infirmity and he would care for me if he found me in that state.

That's a comforting thought. Without that I'd feel worried watching the Deacon and the church money. But I must not make myself worry. I'll sit here near the Deacon and be ready if he wakes. How drowsy I am! Sarah would laugh at me, or pity me, if she saw me so sleepy. She's a dear girl, and I hope to marry her. Every one loves her. William loves us both and would be glad to see us married, I am sure. Even then his faith in me will not be shaken. If he should ever desert me or betray me I would not care to live. Oh! I must not think of such disagreeable things. William is a friend—a friend—for life.

(SILAS is taken by an epileptic fit. After a pause midnight strikes. Enter WILL., softly, R. WILL. takes from his pocket SILAS'S knife.)

WILL. I forgot to give you your knife —— Ha, he is ill! No, it is one of his spells. What a fine watchman he is! Any one could steal the money and the vestrymen could never find the culprit. Here is my chance! Now I can put a spoke in *his* wheel! Sarah would not marry a robber. No, indeed! Master Marner will marry her? Not if I can prevent it! I loved that girl first; and now her affections are turned toward him because he has more money. I'll make it more than even with him! I'll take the money, leave his knife in the drawer and let the people find it there. Marner, the innocent! Marner, the wooer! Ha, ha!

(WILL. takes gold, and exits, R. After an interval SILAS wakes.)

SILAS. Ho-hum! Well, have I slept? A strange feeling hangs like lead upon me! I hope nothing has happened. I ought to be ashamed of such a weakness. But it is more wearisome work here in this still place than weaving at my loom.—Why, it is nearly two o'clock. William has never failed me yet. He must be sick! But I must look to the poor sick Deacon; he is uncommon quiet! (*Goes to adjoining room.*) My God, the poor man is dead! His body is cold! Oh, foolish, weak man that I was to fall asleep! Why, mayhap I was out of my mind. Oh! William, why did you not come? But I must call for help!

[Exit, R., hurriedly.]

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*The vestry of the church. At one end of a plain, oblong table the MINISTER of the church sits; along the side are VESTRYMEN, among them WILL. At the other end sits SILAS.*

(Curtain rises on scene. SILAS rises, protestingly.)

SILAS. But what have I done? Tell me that!

FIRST VESTRYMAN. You shall hear, Master Marner, you shall hear.

MINISTER. Silas Marner, when Brother William Dane left you last night in the sick Deacon's home you were to watch the Deacon and guard the church money. Early this morning you summoned us. We came.

SECOND VESTRYMAN. And you left us in too great a hurry.

THIRD VESTRYMAN. Aye, aye, there's something strange about that.

FIRST VEST. That's true. You should have faced us like an honest man.

MIN. *(raising his hand to quiet the VESTRYMEN)*. Upon investigation we found the money gone, the bureau rifled. In the drawer where the money had been we found—your knife! Some hand has removed that bag of money.

FIRST VEST. And whose hand can it be, if not the one who owns that knife?

MIN. What have you to say to the charge of stealing, Master Marner?

SILAS. God will clear me. I know nothing about the knife being there, or the money being gone. Search me and my dwelling; you will find nothing there but three pound five of my own savings, which William Dane knows I have had these six months.

(WILL. shakes his head and murmurs.)

MIN. The proof is heavy against you, Master Marner. No man was with our departed brother but you alone; for William Dane declares that he was hindered by a sudden sickness from going to take his appointed place. You yourself said he had not come. Besides this, you neglected the dying man.

SILAS. I must have slept. Or I must have had another visitation like you all have seen me under. The thief must have come and gone while I was not in my body, but out of my body. But I say again, search me and my dwelling, for I have been nowhere else.

FIRST VEST. Very well, Silas, we will search it as you desire.

[*Exeunt FIRST and SECOND VEST., R.*]

WILL. Silas, why do you keep the truth from us? Would it not be better to confess your sin than to have us discover it and punish you?

THIRD VEST. Come, tell us all about it.

SILAS. William, for nine years we have gone in and out together; have you ever known me to tell a lie? But God will clear me!

WILL. Brother, how do I know what you may have done in the secret chambers of your heart to give Satan an advantage over you?

SILAS. I remember now, the knife wasn't in *my* pocket!

WILL. I know nothing of what you mean!

MIN. Yes, Brother Silas, what mean you?

THIRD VEST. Speak out your meaning!

SILAS. I am sore stricken! I can say nothing! God will clear me!

Reënter VESTRYMEN, R.

FIRST VEST. We have searched Marner's dwelling and have found the telltale bag.

SECOND VEST. Is not this enough to convict the man?

MIN. Aye, the proof is strong! But we must proceed according to the order of the church. Silas shall have a trial before us. Let God's will be done.

(Lots are prepared and drawn.)

FIRST VEST. Is there any more to be said?

SILAS. William Dane, the last time I remember the knife was when I took it out and gave it to you to clean your pipe. I don't remember putting it back into my pocket again. *You* stole the money! and now you weave a plot to prove the crime against me! But you may prosper for all that! There is no just God that governs the world righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent!

WILL. I hope no one hears you, for they might rightly think it was the voice of Satan! I can do nothing but pray for you, Silas.

MIN. Master Marner, we find that the lots declare you guilty! Providence judges rightly. We must not have a guilty one in our midst. Silas, you must migrate far away from here

where you may begin your life anew. We will not let the law take hold of you if you will depart from Lantern Yard and never return.

[*Exeunt all but* SILAS, R.]

SILAS. She, too, will cast me off! My last friend gone! My good name gone! Friendship, love, faith gone! (*Pause.*) I *will* go far away. I'll hoard up gold! There's my friend! I'll put my faith in that! I'll call no human being "friend" again!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The living-room of the homestead of SQUIRE CASS.*

GODFREY CASS *moves restlessly in his chair near the table as if expecting some one to join him.*

Enter DUNSTAN CASS, C.

DUN. Well, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me? You're my elders and betters, you know; I was obliged to come when you sent for me.

GOD. Why, this is what I want; and just shake yourself sober and listen, will you? I want to tell you I must hand over that rent of Fowler's to the Squire, or else tell him I gave it to you. He's threatening to distrain for it, and it'll all be out soon whether I tell him or not. The Squire said just now, before he went out, he would send word to the constable, Cox, to distrain if Fowler didn't come and pay up his arrears of rent this week. The Squire's short of cash and in no humor to stand any nonsense. And you know what he threatened if ever he found you making away with his money again. So now see and get that money for me and pretty quickly, will you?

DUN. Oh! Suppose, now, *you* get the money yourself, and save me the trouble; eh? Since you were so kind as to hand it over to me, you'll not refuse me the kindness to pay it back for me; it was your brotherly love made you do it, you know.

GOD. Don't come near me with that look, or I'll knock you down!

DUN. Oh, no, you won't, because I'm such a good-natured brother, you know. I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife. And I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But I see, I don't do it—I'm so easy and good-natured! You'll take any trouble for me. You'll get the hundred pounds for me; I know you will.

GOD. How can I get the money? I haven't a shilling to

bless myself with. And it's a lie that you'd slip into my place. You'd get yourself turned out, too, that's all. For, if you begin telling tales, I'll follow. Bob's my father's favorite; you know that very well. The Squire would only think himself well rid of you.

DUN. Never mind. It'd be very pleasant to me to go in your company; you're such a handsome brother. And we've been so fond of quarreling with each other, I shouldn't ha' known what to do without you. But you'd like better for us both to stay at home together; I know you would. So you'll manage to get that little sum of money; and I'll bid you good-day, though I'm so sorry to part.

GOD. I tell you I have no money! I can get no money!

DUN. Borrow it of old Kimble.

GOD. I tell you he won't lend me any more; and I shan't ask him.

DUN. Well, then, sell Wildfire.

GOD. Yes, that's easy talking. I must have the money directly.

DUN. Then why don't you get it of the old weaver at the Stone-Pits? I warrant the old miser has a pile of it.

GOD. What's he got to do with selling or buying Wildfire?

DUN. Oh, he's not in the horse-buying business; but he's laid by a lot of money, what with his weaving and saving since he came here from the North country. I could make friends with him; I am privileged to go 'most anywhere, you know. If he hoards up his gold, I ought, like an accommodating gentleman, to show him how to get rid of it.

GOD. You're deucedly resourceful in your money-getting schemes. But I've no business with the old weaver. I guess I'll have to part with Wildfire.

DUN. Well, you've only to ride him to the hunt to-morrow. There'll be Bryce and Keating there for sure. You'll get more bids than one.

GOD. I dare say; and get back home at eight o'clock splashed to the chin. I'm going to Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance.

DUN. Oho! And there's sweet Miss Nancy coming; and we shall dance with her, and promise never to be naughty again, and be taken into favor again, and ——

GOD. Hold your tongue about Miss Nancy, you fool, or I'll throttle you!

DUN. What for? You've a very good chance. I'd advise

you to creep up her sleeve again ; it'd be saving time. If Molly should happen to take a drop too much laudanum some day, and make a widower of you !

GOD. I'll tell you what it is, my patience is pretty near at an end. If you'd a little more sharpness in you, you might know that you may urge a man a bit too far and make one leap as easy as another. I don't know but it is so now. I may as well tell the Squire myself.

DUN. Oh, no, you won't, Godfrey, dear ; you wouldn't dare. And besides, what good would that do ?

GOD. I should get you off my back, if I got nothing else. And, after all, he'll know some time. She's been threatening to come herself and tell him. So don't flatter yourself that your secrecy's worth any price you choose to ask. You drain me of money till I've got nothing to pacify her with ; and she'll do as she threatens some day. It's all one. I'll tell my father everything myself, and you may go to the devil.

DUN. As you please ! But I'll have a draft of ale first.

(SERVANT brings ale, c., while GOD. stands before the fire.)

GOD. It's just like you to talk about my selling Wildfire in that cool way—the last thing I've got to call my own, and the best bit of horse-flesh I ever had in my life. And if you'd a spark of pride in you, you'd be ashamed to see the stables emptied, and everybody sneering about it. But it's my belief you'd sell yourself, if it was only for the pleasure of making somebody feel he'd got a bad bargain.

DUN. Aye, aye ; you do me justice, I see. You know I'm a jewel for 'ticing people into bargains. For which reason I'd advise you to let *me* sell Wildfire. I'd ride him to the hunt to-morrow for you, with pleasure. I shouldn't look so handsome as you in the saddle ; but it's the horse they'll bid for, not the rider.

GOD. Yes, I dare say,—trust my horse to you !

DUN. As you please. It's you have got to pay Fowler's money ; it's none of my business. You received the money from him when you went to Fowler's, and you told the Squire it wasn't paid. I'd nothing to do with that ; you chose to be so obliging as to give it to me ; that was all. If you don't want to pay the money back to the Squire, it's all the same to me. But I was willing to accommodate you by undertaking to sell the horse, seeing it's not convenient for you to go so far to-morrow.

GOD. Well, you mean no nonsense about the horse, eh? You'll sell him all fair, and hand over the money? If you don't, you know, everything will go to smash; for I've nothing else to trust to. And you'll have less pleasure in pulling the house over my head when your own skull's to be broken too.

DUN. Aye, aye, all right. I thought you'd come round. I'm the fellow to bring old Bryce up to the scratch. I'll get you a hundred and twenty for him if I get you a penny. And you shall have the money if I get back alive.

GOD. But it'll p'r'aps rain cats and dogs to-morrow as it did yesterday; and then you can't go!

DUN. Not it. I'm always lucky in my weather. It might rain if you wanted to go yourself. You never hold trumps, you know. I always do. You've got the beauty, you see, and I've got the luck. So you must keep me by you for your crooked sixpence; you'll never get along without me.

GOD. Confound you, hold your tongue! and take care to keep sober to-morrow, else you'll get pitched on your head coming home; and Wildfire might be the worse for it.

DUN. Make your tender heart easy! You never knew me to see double when I'd got a bargain to make; it 'ud spoil the fun. Besides, when I fall, I'm warranted to fall on my feet.

(Exit, c., slamming door; GOD. remains in meditation.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*Interior of SILAS'S hut. There is a fireplace in which SILAS'S soup-kettle hangs above the coals. A weaver's loom stands in view. A few other coarse pieces of furniture can be seen. SILAS is in the act of preparing to go out with a finished piece of linen.*

SILAS. 'Tis a nasty night for one to leave a comf'table fire an' vent're out in this dirty weather. But business is business, and my gold increases every day. Priscilla Lammeter needs the linen. And she shall have it.

(Buttons threadbare coat and goes out R. Time elapses. Enter DUN., cautiously, R.)

DUN. Well! who'd have thought the old codger had such a deucedly snug place!—Nice and warm. *(Goes to fire,*

warms hands.) And good enough for him. I came up here for a lantern but I'll warm myself first. With my clothes in this shape, all wet and soiled, I'll probably be brought down with a fine cold! Of all the beastly luck! I left the Red House early with Wildfire, and after striking a good bargain with Bryce to sell that nag for one hundred and twenty, I had the ill luck to stake him! He was dead before I knew it. I walked, and I walked, the road getting more muddy and dangerous, for a nasty drizzle had come on. I have Godfrey's hunting whip with me, and if it hadn't been for that I'd be walking yet. I managed to feel my way along somehow. I fell down, too, in a beastly hole; all muddy it was; worse luck! I managed to crawl out of it at any rate. I had lost the road by this time, and I was feeling mad at everybody and everything, when I noticed a beam of light through the woods. I followed it to this old hut of the weaver. I thought I might be able to borrow a lantern, so that I might watch out for the Stone-Pits. Br-r-r, what a horrible death that would be! But I mustn't think of such frightful things!—What a deuced disagreeable life the miser must live up here; all alone! It must be dreadfully lonely, living just to hoard gold! But I've got to hatch up some excuse to give Godfrey. (*Pause.*) I wonder if the old fellow has any money about the place? He's not in? Maybe he's slipped into the Stone-Pits! In that case who's going to get his money? Anyway, no one will know who took it. I wonder where he keeps it! (*Looks about.*) It may be in the bed, or in the thatch, or in the floor. I'll look anyway. (*Finds gold in floor.*) H'm-m, here it is! That isn't such a bad haul. (*Covers hole with sand.*) Thanks, Silas, for the loan! But I don't know when you'll get it back!

(*Buttons coat and goes out. Time elapses. SILAS enters, R.*)

SILAS. Oh, I am glad to get back into my nice warm place! If it 'ud on'y pay me to go out such a night! Them folks, the Lammeters, wants me to come to church. Why should I go to church? I've no interest there. If they'd on'y let me alone, I'd be better off. But they're al'ays a-meddlin'. If it ain't the church it's somethin' else! I don't trust nary one of 'em! They're all bad; but—my gold, my gold! I can trust that! That don't play me no tricks! I must fetch it and count it. (*Uncovers hole; agitated. Looks in other places.*) My gold! my gold is gone! Gone! Gone! Where can it be? Maybe it's in the table! No!

(*Shrieks. Exit, R. Reënters with SOLOMON MACEY.*)

MACEY (*to REV. MR. CRACKENTHORPE outside*). Hurry, man, the miser's dying! (*To SILAS.*) What ails y', man? Are you sick?

Enter JEM RODNEY, R.

JEM. Crackenthorpe's a-comin'.

Enter CRACK., R.

CRACK. What ails the man, eh?

SILAS. My gold is gone! I've been robbed! (*Turns to JEM.*) If it was you stole my money, give it me back, and I won't meddle wi' you! Give it me back, and I'll give you—I'll give you half a guinea!

JEM. Me stole your money! Hm—what should I do that for? tell me that!

CRACK. Don't get angry wi' him, Jem! Come, Marner, if you've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible like, and show as you're in your right mind. If you expect any one to listen to you, go on and speak straightfor'ard. Sit down, men, sit down!

MACEY. Ay, ay, make him sit down! Go on, Marner.

SILAS. Why, I jest come in from Miss Lammeter's. I was takin' her some linen that I'd finished. I come in and looked for my gold! It's gone! Oh, it's gone!

MACEY. It ain't Jem Rodney as has gone and done the stealin' of it. Jem's been wi' me, and I can testify to that, since before you left your house, Master Marner, by your own account.

SILAS. I was wrong, yes, yes. I ought to have thought. I don't accuse you, Jem. I won't accuse nobody. I try, I try, to think where the gold can be.

JEM. How much might there be of that gold, Marner?

SILAS. Two hundred and seventy-two pounds, twelve and sixpence, last night when I counted it.

MACEY. Whew! Why, that'd be none too heavy to carry.

JEM. Ay, they're gone where it's hot enough to melt 'em, no doubt.

MACEY. Well, what I'd advise you to do is to get on your wraps and go to Master Kenche's; he's sick, the constable is;

but he can appoint one of us as depities, and whoever is can come back here and help you examine your premises.

SILAS. Ay, mebbe you're right!

[*Exit SILAS, with the others, R.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III.—SILAS is at his work in his home, groaning as he spins.

SILAS. My gold, my gold is gone! I got nothing to comfort me now. I got nothing to cheer me. I'll never trust any human creature again. It wasn't bad enough to drive me out o' Lantern Yard, where I lived respectable like; but I'm hounded wherever I go. I come here to be let alone. They take my money, the only prop of my life, the only thing that's comforted me when I was lone. There ain't no use in livin' anyway. I—— (*Knocking at the door.*) What's that? Somebody else to torment me, I s'pose! (*Knocking again.*) No! No! You can't come in. I don't want——

Enter MRS. DOLLY WINTHROP with AARON WINTHROP, R.

MRS. W. I'd a bakin' yisterday, Master Marner, and the lard cakes turned out better nor common, and I'd ha' asked you to accept some, if you'd thought well. I don't eat such things myself, for a bit a bread's what I like from year's end to the other; but men's stomachs are made so comical; they want a change—they do. I know, God help 'em.

SILAS. I thank ye, ma'am; thank ye kindly.

(*Looks at cakes closely.*)

MRS. W. There's letters pricked on 'em; I can't read 'em myself, and there's nobody, not Mr. Macey himself, rightly knows what they mean; but they've a good meaning, for they're the same as is on the pulpit cloth at church. What are they, Aaron, my dear? (*AARON hides behind chair.*) Oh, go, that's naughty. Well, whatever the letters are, they've a good meaning; and it's a stamp as had been in our house, Ben says, ever since he was a little un, and his mother used to put it on the cakes and I've al'ays put it on too; for if there's any good, we've need of it i' this world.

SILAS. It's I. H. S.

MRS. W. Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off. I prick 'em on all the loaves, and all the cakes, though sometimes they won't hold because o' the rising. And I hope they'll bring good to you, Master Marner, for it's wi' that will I brought you the cakes; and you see the letters have held better nor common.

SILAS. Thank you—thank you kindly.

MRS. W. But you didn't hear the church bells this morning, Master Marner. I doubt you didn't know it was Sunday.

SILAS. Yes, I did; I heard 'em.

MRS. W. Dear heart! But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself—if you *didn't* go to church. Could it ha' been as they'd no church where you was born?

SILAS. Oh, yes. There was churches a many; it was a big town. But I knew nothing of 'em. I went to chapel.

(SILAS offers cake to AARON, who shrinks back, but shyly accepts it.)

MRS. W. Oh, for shame, Aaron! Why, you don't want cake again yet a while. He's wonderful hearty, that he is, God knows. (*Strokes AARON's head.*) And he's got a voice like a bird. You wouldn't think! He can sing a Christmas carrill as his father taught him. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carrill to Master Marner, come. (*AARON rubs forehead on his mother's shoulder.*) Oh, that's naughty. Stan' up when mother tells you, and let me hold the cake till you've done.

AARON (*singing, stands just back of table*).

“God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay;
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas-day.”

MRS. W. That's Christmas music. There's no other music equil to the Christmas music. The boy sings pretty, don't he, Master Marner?

SILAS. Yes, very pretty. (*Offers AARON more cake.*)

MRS. W. Oh, no, thank you, Master Marner. We must be going home now. And you'll excuse me being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well, I do. Make your bow, Aaron.

SILAS. Good-bye, and thank you kindly.

(*Exeunt* MRS. W. *with* AARON, R. *SILAS stands as if affected by the present of the cakes which he puts carefully away. Time elapses.*)

Enter MACEY, R.

MACEY. Come, Master Marner, why, you've no call to sit a-moanin'. You're a deal better off to ha' lost your money nor to ha' kept it by foul means. I used to think, when you first come to these parts, as you were no better as you should be. You were younger a deal nor you are now. But you was always a starin', white-faced creature, partly like a bald-faced calf, as I may say. But there's no knowin'. It isn't every queer-looksed thing that Old Harry's had the makin' of—I mean, speakin' of toads and such; for they're often harmless, and useful against varmin. And it's pretty much the same wi' you, as far as I can see. Though as to the yarbs and stuff to cure the breathin', if you brought that sort o' knowledge from distant parts, you might ha' been a bit freer of it. And if the knowledge wasn't well come by, why, you might ha' made up for it by comin' to the church reg'lar.

SILAS. I never want to go to church. Everybody, even the children, looks queer at me.

MACEY. As for the children the Wise Woman charmed, I've been at the christenin' of 'em again and again, and they took the water just as well. And that's reasonable; for if Old Harry is a mind to do a bit o' kindness for a holiday like, who's got anything again that? That's my thinkin', and I've been clerk of this parish forty year. And I know when the parson and me does the cussin' of a Ash Wednesday, there's no cussin' o' folks as have a mind to be cured without a doctor, let Dr. Kimble say what he will. And so, Master Marner, as I was sayin'—for there's windings in things as they may carry you to the fur end o' the Prayer-book afore you get back to 'em—my advice is as you keep up your sperrits.

SILAS. And it's little as I've got to keep my sperrits up.

MACEY. For as for thinkin' you're a deep un, and ha' got more inside you nor'll bear daylight, I'm not o' that opinion at all. And so I tell the neighbors; for, says I, you talk o' Master Marner makin' out a tale, why, it's nonsense, that is. It 'ud take a cute man to make a tale like that; and, says I, he looked as scared as a rabbit. Come, Master Marner, have y' got nothin' to say to that?

SILAS. Oh, I thank you, thank you—kindly, sir.

MACEY. Ay, ay, to be sure; I thought you would; and my advice is—have you got a Sunday suit?

SILAS. No.

MACEY. I doubted it was so. Now, let me advise you to get a Sunday suit; there's Tookey, he's a poor creatur', but he's got my tailorin' business, and some o' my money in it. And he shall make a suit at a low price, and give you trust; and then you can come to church and be a bit neighborly. Why, you've never heard me say "Amen!" since you come into these parts, and I recommend you to lose no time, for it'll be poor work when Tookey has it all to himself, for I mayn't be equal to stand in the desk at all come another winter.

SILAS. I'm sorry not to hear you. But where'd I get the money for the clothes?

MACEY. As for the money for the suit o' clothes, why, you get a matter of a pound a week at your weavin', Master Marner, and you're a young man, eh? for all you look so mushed. Why, you couldn't ha' been five-and-twenty when you come into these parts, eh?

SILAS. I don't know; I can't rightly say—it's a long time since.

MACEY. Well, I'll bid you good-evenin', Master Marner. I hope to see you in the church soon; good-night. [*Exit, R.*]

SILAS. They'll never get me in the church. Buy a suit! I'm goin' to save my money *again*, to have a friend *again*.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I.—SQUIRE *talking with* DR. KIMBLE ; MRS. CRACKENTHORPE *and others in background.*

(*A New Year's party at the Red House, home of SQUIRE. MACEY with his fiddle, and others of the country orchestra, tuning up.*)

SQUIRE (*to* MR. LAMMETER). Ay, ay, us old fellows may wish ourselves young to-night when we see the mistletoe bough in the white parlor. It's true, most things are gone back'ard in these last thirty years. The country's goin' down since the old king fell ill.

DR. K. There, Squire, there's Lammeter's daughter, Nancy, as sweet and pretty as ever.

SQUIRE. When I look at Miss Nancy here, I begin to think the lasses keep up their quality. Ding me, if I remember a sample to match her ! not when I was a fine young fellow, and thought a deal of my pigtail. No offense to you, madam. (*To* MRS. C.) I didn't know you when you were as young as Miss Nancy here.

MRS. C. Oh, no offense, Squire.

SQUIRE. And who is this rosy-looking little chap ?

Enter MRS. W. *and* AARON, C.

MRS. W. (*to* AARON). Can't you speak to the Squire, Aaron ? The poor child is nervous like, Squire. Them frills 'round his neck scratches him so he's all out o' sorts.

SQUIRE. Ay, no doubt. I remember how them same collars fretted me.

AARON. Mayther, how does that big cock's feather stick in Mrs. Crackenthorpe's head ? Is there a little hole for it like in my shuttlecock ?

MRS. W. Hush, lad, hush ; that's the way the ladies dress themselves, that is. It does make her look funny, though—partly like a short-necked bottle wi' a long quill in it.

SQUIRE. Well, Godfrey, you here at last ? Ah, Miss Nancy, we are honored with your presence.

DR. K. Now, Miss Nancy, you won't forget your promise. You're to save a dance for me, you know.

SQUIRE. Come, come, Kimble, don't you be too for'ard. Give the young uns fair play. There's my son Godfrey'll be wantin' to have a tilt with you if you run off with Miss Nancy. He's bespoke her for the first dance, I'll be bound. Eh, sir, what do you say? Haven't you asked Miss Nancy for the first dance?

GOD. No, sir, I've not asked her yet, but I hope she'll consent, if nobody else has been before me.

NANCY LAMMETER. No, I've not engaged myself.

SQUIRE. There's Solomon Macey and his players tuned up ready for the dance. Open the doors. Come, Kimble, we'll all go in. [*Exeunt all but SQUIRE and GOD., C.*]

GOD. Oh, father, this way a minute!

SQUIRE. Well, what do you want?

GOD. There's been a cursed piece of ill luck with Wildfire; happened the day before yesterday.

SQUIRE. What! broke his knees? I thought you knew how to ride better than that, sir. I never threw a horse down in my life. If I had I might ha' whistled for another; for my father wasn't quite so ready to unstring as some other fathers I know of. But they must turn over a new leaf, they must. What with mortgages and arrears, I'm as short o' cash as a roadside pauper. And that fool Kimble says the newspaper's talkin' about peace. Why, the country wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Prices 'uld run down like a jack, and I should *never* get my arrears; not if I sold all the fellows out.

GOD. You've got those outlying farms; and Fowler —

SQUIRE. And there's that damned Fowler! I won't put up with him any longer; the lying scoundrel told me he'd be sure to pay me a hundred last month. He takes advantage because he's on that outlying farm, and thinks I shall forget him.

GOD. It's worse than breaking the horse's knees,—he's been staked and killed. But I wasn't thinking of asking you to buy me another horse; I was only thinking I'd lost the means of paying you with the price of Wildfire, as I meant to do. Dunsey took him to the hunt to sell him for me the other day. And after he'd made a bargain for a hundred and twenty with Bryce, he went after the hounds and took some fool's leap or other that did for the horse at once.

SQUIRE. Well, you ought to have known better than to let Dunsey have him!

GOD. If it hadn't been for that, I should have paid you a hundred pounds this morning. The truth is, sir, I'm very sorry; I was quite to blame. Fowler did pay that hundred pounds rent. He gave it to me when I was over there one day last month, and Dunsey bothered me for the money; and I let him have it because I hoped I should be able to pay it to you before this.

SQUIRE. You let Dunsey have it, sir? And how long have you been so thick with Dunsey that you must plot with him to embezzle my money? Are you turning out a scamp? I tell you I won't have it! I'll turn the whole pack of you out of the house together, and marry again. I'd have you remember, sir, my property's got no entail on it; since my grandfather's time, the Casses can do as they please with their lands. Remember that, sir! Let Dunsey have the money! Why should you let Dunsey have the money? There's some lie at the bottom of this.

GOD. There's no lie, sir. I wouldn't have spent the money myself; but Dunsey bothered me and I was a fool and let him have it. But I meant to pay it, whether he did or not. That's the whole story. I never meant to embezzle money, and I'm not the man to do it. You never knew me to do a dishonest trick, sir.

SQUIRE. Where's Dunsey, then? What do you stand there talking for? Go and fetch Dunsey, as I tell you, and let him give an account of what he wanted the money for, and what he's done with it. He shall repent, or I'll turn him out. I said I would, and I'll do it. He shan't brave me. Go and fetch him!

GOD. Dunsey isn't back, sir.

SQUIRE. What! Did he break his own neck, then?

GOD. No, he's made to hurt other people. He wasn't hurt, I believe. The horse was found dead and Dunsey must have walked off. I dare say we shall see him again by and by. I don't know where he is.

SQUIRE. And what must you be letting him have my money for? Answer me that!

GOD. Well, sir, I don't know.

SQUIRE. You don't know? I tell you what it is, sir; you've been up to some trick and you've been bribing him not to tell!

GOD. Why, sir, it was a little affair between me and Dunsey; it's not anything for any one else. It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries; it wouldn't have made any

difference to you, sir, if I'd not the ill luck to lose Wildfire. I should have paid you the money.

SQUIRE. Fooleries, pshaw! It's time you'd done with fooleries. And I'd have you know, sir, you must ha' done with 'em. Your goings-on are not what I shall find money for any longer! There's my grandfather had his stables full of horses, and kept a good house, too, and in worse times than these, by what I can make out. And so might I, if I hadn't four good-for-nothing fellows to hang on me like horse-leeches. I've been too good a father to you all, that's what it is. But I shall pull up, sir. It'll be all the worse for you, you know—you'd need try and help one keep things together.

GOD. Well, sir, I've often offered to take the management of things, but you know you've taken it ill always, and seemed to think that I wanted to push you out of your place.

SQUIRE. I know nothing of your offering, or of my takin' it ill; but I know one while you seem to be thinkin' o' marryin', and I didn't offer to put any obstacle in your way, as some fathers would. I'd as lief you'd marry Lammeter's daughter as anybody. I suppose if I'd say you nay, you'd ha' kept on with it; but for want of contradiction, you've changed your mind. The lass hasn't said downright she won't have you, has she?

GOD. No, but I don't think she will.

SQUIRE. Think! why haven't you the courage to ask her? Do you stick to it, you want to have her? That's the thing!

GOD. There's no other woman I want to marry.

SQUIRE. Well, then, let me make the offer for you, that's all, if you haven't the pluck to do it yourself. Lammeter isn't likely to be loath for his daughter to marry into *my* family, I should think. And as for the pretty lass, she wouldn't have her cousin, and there's nobody else could ha' stood in your way.

GOD. I'd rather let it be, please, sir, at present. I think she's a little offended with me just now! and I should like to speak for myself.

SQUIRE. Well, speak, then, and manage it, and see if you can't turn over a new leaf. That's what a man must do when he's thinking o' marrying.

GOD. I don't see how I can think of it at present, sir. You wouldn't like me to settle on one of the farms, I suppose, and I don't think she'd come to live in this house with all my brothers. It's a different sort of life to what she's been used to.

SQUIRE. Not come to live in this house? Don't tell me! You ask her, that's all.

GOD. I'd rather let the thing be at present, sir. I hope you won't try to hurry it on by saying anything.

SQUIRE. I shall do what I choose! And I shall let you know I'm master! Else you may turn out, and find an estate to drop into somewhere else. Now come along into the white parlor; they're looking for me now.

(As SQUIRE leaves SILAS knocks. DR. K. enters C., and he and GOD. usher the miser in, L. He tells his story to them, while he holds a small child in his arms.)

SILAS. There's a woman—dead, I think—dead in the snow at the Stone-Pits—not far from my door!

DR. K. Godfrey, say as little as possible to the ladies, for it might shock them. I'll get on my things. You tell the Squire about it quietly and you and I'll go and help.

(Exit DR. K., C. GOD. leaves SILAS sitting with the child and fetches the SQUIRE, C.)

GOD. Marner says there's a woman dead at the Stone-Pits. He's got her child there. Dr. Kimble and I are going over to help Marner. *(SQUIRE looks at child. GOD., aside.)* It may be my wife Molly's child, and Molly may be the dead woman —

SQUIRE. I'll go and fetch the ladies.

GOD. But Dr. Kimble said not —

SQUIRE. I'll not allow Kimble to manage affairs in my house!

(Exit SQUIRE, C., followed by GOD. Enter SQUIRE and GOD. with rest of party, C.)

MRS. C. What child is it?

MRS. W. Yes, whose child is it?

NANCY. Godfrey, whose child is it?

GOD. I don't know. Some poor woman's who's been found dead in the snow, I believe. *(Aside.)* After all, am I certain? *[Exit, L.*

MRS. C. Well, then, Master Marner, you'd better leave the child here. I'll tell one of the women to fetch it.

SILAS. No! No! I can't part with it! I can't let it go! It's come to me! I've a right to keep it!

Reënter GOD., L.

GOD. Well, ladies, I met Dr. Kimble coming from the Stone-Pits. He assures me the woman is quite dead. He sent me home, for, he said, it was no time to be walking about with pumps on. It's snowing hard, you know.

MRS. C. We all had better pack up and leave before it snows any harder.

SQUIRE. Yes, Mrs. Crackenthorpe, perhaps you're right. It'll be disagreeable with the snow blowin'. Well, we ——

[*Exeunt all but SILAS and GOD., L.*]

GOD. You'll take the child to the Parish House to-morrow?

SILAS. Who says so? Will they make me give her up?

GOD. Why, you wouldn't like to keep her; an old bachelor like you?

SILAS. Till anybody shows they've a right to take her from me! The mother's dead; and I reckon it's got no father. It's a lone thing. My money's gone, I don't know where, and this's come from I don't know where.

GOD. Poor little thing! Let me give something toward finding clothes for it. (*Gives SILAS money. SILAS leaves with the child, L.*) The way is clear for me now. Molly, my wife, is dead. Dunsey's cursed hold is loosed from my throat at last. My courage is up again. Now, I'll marry Nancy!

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Interior of SILAS's hut. Several years have elapsed. SILAS is working listlessly at his loom. AARON is seated near him, talking.*

AARON. How did you happen to call her "Eppie," Master Marner?

SILAS. It was the name of my little sister that I carried in my arms for many days before she died; and then it was—it was my mother's name. Ay, she's took the place of both mother and sister. There was no other name for her. Eppie. Eppie.

AARON. Eppie! It sounds prettier every day. She was talking to me to-day about how bad she wanted a garden. *I'll* make her one. It won't be much work for me. But here she comes now!

Enter EPPIE, R.

EPPIE. Aaron, have you been with father all this time?

AARON. Yes, I've been here all the time. But mother's waiting for me. I'll be back again, Eppie, to talk over that garden. Good-bye, Master Marner. [*Exit, R.*]

EPPIE. I wish we *had* a little garden, father, with double daisies in it, like Mrs. Winthrop's; only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging, and bringing of fresh soil; and you couldn't do that, could you, father? Anyhow, I shouldn't like you to do it, for it 'ud be too hard work for you.

SILAS. Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit of garden. These long evenings I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two of flowers for you. And again, i' the morning I could ha' a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom. Why didn't you tell me before as you wanted a bit o' garden?

EPPIE. Well, Aaron said he'd do it, father; when the work's slack, he can find odd bits o' time. He's coming this afternoon,—to—settle—what land's to be taken in. But not unless you promise me not to work at the hard diggin', father. For I shouldn't ha' said anything about it. Aaron said as he

was only too glad and willing to do a turn o' work for you. And, father, you won't work in it till it's all easy, and you and me can mark out the beds, and make holes and plant the roots.

SILAS. All right, Eppie, child, I'll promise; and won't we look fine with our plants and hedges!

EPPIE. It'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-Pits when we've got some flowers, for I always think that flowers can see us, and know what we are talkin' about. And what land's to be taken in —

SILAS. Eh—Aaron's told me all. (*EPPIE approaches SILAS. Leans her head on SILAS's shoulder.*) And you'll bring him here to live? And you'll both take care of me in my old days? When Providence brought this golden hair to my cottage it was better than all the gold I lost. And, Eppie, I'm goin' to give a party—to-night for Aaron and you. He's goin' to fetch his mother and Mr. Macey. And I expect Mr. and Mrs. Cass. Ay, he's a good lad, is Aaron. I could make the garden, though.

EPPIE. But not unless you promise me not to work too hard. I'll have a bit of rosemary and bergamot, and thyme because they're so sweet-smelling; and Aaron said he would bring us slips of anything; and he said he could get us a slip o' lavender from the Red House.

SILAS. Well, so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red House; for Mr. Godfrey's been so good to us, and built us up a new end of the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I couldn't abide to be imposin' for the garden stuff or anything else. Well, Aaron was going to bring his mother over this afternoon, you know, and she can tell us more about the garden than any one else I knows of.

EPPIE. Oh, daddie, my little old daddie! I'm so glad! I don't think I shall want anything else when we've got a little garden, and I knew Aaron would dig it for us—I knew that very well.

SILAS. You're a deep little puss, you are, but you'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron.

EPPIE. Oh, no, I shan't, he likes it!

SILAS. Oh, I — But go to the door, Eppie, somebody knocks. (*Enter GOD. and NANCY, R.*) Well, ah, good afternoon, Mr. Cass, and Mrs. Cass, too! Come in! Eppie, my child, get chairs for Mr. Godfrey and Mrs. Cass.

NANCY (*to EPPIE*). It does one good to see such a picture o' health and happiness!

GOD. I've got something disagreeable to tell you, Marner. It's nobody living. It's Dunstan, my brother Dunstan that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton.

SILAS. In the Stone-Pits?

GOD. The Stone-Pits have gone dry suddenly, from the draining, I suppose; and there he lay, has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting whip with my name on; he took it away, without my knowing, the day he went hunting.

SILAS. Do you think he drowned himself?

GOD. No, he fell in! Dunstan was the one that robbed you of your gold! There was the money in the Pit, all of it. Everything's been gathered up, and they've taken the skeleton to the Rainbow. I've brought you back your stolen gold.

(SILAS sits dazed, disregarding gold.)

EPPIE. Father, do you hear what Mr. Cass is saying?

(Puts hand on his shoulder.)

SILAS. Ay, I heard him.

GOD. Well, Marner, it's a great comfort to me to see you with your money again that you've been deprived of so many years. It was one of my family did you the wrong—the more grief to me, and I feel bound to make up to you now for it in every way.

NANCY. It's only fair that we should do something, Master Marner.

GOD. Whatever I can do for you will be nothing but paying a debt, even if I looked no further than the robbery. But there are other things I'm beholden—shall be beholden to you for, Marner.

SILAS. Sir, I've a deal to thank you for a'ready. As for the robbery, I count it no loss to me. And if I did, you weren't answerable for it.

GOD. You may look at it in that way, Marner; but I never can. And I hope you'll let me act according to my own feeling of what's just. I know you're easily contented; you've been a hard-working man all your life.

SILAS. Yes, sir, yes. I should ha' been bad off without

my work ; it was what I held by when everything else was gone from me.

GOD. Ah, it was a good trade for you in this country, because there's a great deal of linen-weaving to be done. But you're getting rather past such close work, Marner ; it's time you laid by and had some rest. You look a good deal pulled down, though you're not an old man, are you ?

SILAS. Five and fifty, as near as I can say, sir.

GOD. Oh, why, you may live thirty years longer. Look at old Macey ! And that money on the table is but little, after all. It won't go far either way, whether it's put out to interest, or you were to live on it as long as it would last. It wouldn't go far if you'd nobody to keep but yourself, and you've two to keep for a good many years now.

SILAS. Eh, sir, I'm in no fear o' want ; we shall do very well. Eppie and me'll do well enough. There's few working folks have got so much laid by as that. I don't know what it is to gentlefolks, but I look upon it as a deal, almost too much. And as for us, it's little we want.

EPPIE. Only the garden, father.

NANCY. You love a garden, my dear ? We should agree in that ; I give a deal of time to the garden.

GOD. Ah, there's plenty of gardening at the Red House. You've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It'd be a great comfort to you to see her well provided for, wouldn't it ? She looks blooming and healthy, but not fit for any hardships ; she doesn't look like a strapping girl come of working parents. You'd like to have her taken care of by those who can leave her well off and make a lady of her ; she's more fit for it than for a rough life, such as she might come to have in a few years' time.

SILAS. I don't take your meaning, sir.

GOD. Well, my meaning is this, Marner ; Mrs. Cass and I, you know, have no children—nobody to be the better for our good home, and everything else that we have—more than enough for ourselves. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us—and we should like to have Eppie.

NANCY. And treat her in every way as our own child.

GOD. It'd be a great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way, after you've been at the trouble of bringing her up so well. And it's right you should have every reward for that. And Eppie, I'm sure, will

always love you and be grateful to you ; she'd come and see you very often, and we should be on the lookout to do everything we could toward making you comfortable.

SILAS. Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass.

EPPIE. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own any one nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady. Thank you all the same. I couldn't give up the folks I'm used to.

GOD. But I've a claim on you, Eppie—the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child ; her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her that must stand before every other.

SILAS. Then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen years ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body ? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine. You've no right to her ! When a man turns a blessing from his door it falls to them as take it in.

GOD. I know that, Marner ; I am sorry. I've repented of my conduct in that matter.

SILAS. I'm glad to hear it, sir ; but repentance doesn't alter what's been goin' on for sixteen year. Your comin' now and sayin' " I'm her father " doesn't alter the feelings inside us. It's *me* she's been callin' her father ever since she could say the word.

GOD. But I think you might look at the thing more reasonably, Marner ; it is not as if she was to be taken quite away from you, so that you'd never see her again. She'll be very near you, and come to see you very often. She'll feel just the same toward you.

SILAS. Just the same ? How'll she feel just the same as she does now, when we eat o' the same bit, and drink o' the same cup, and think o' the same things from one day's end to another ? Just the same ? That's idle talk. You'd cut us in two.

GOD. I should have thought, Marner, I should have thought your affection for Eppie would make you rejoice in what was for her good even if it called upon you to give up something. You ought to remember your own life's uncertain, and she's at an age when her lot may soon be fixed in a way very different from

what it would be in her father's home ; she may marry some low working man.

EPPIE. But, Mr. Cass, I couldn't leave father all alone. And what's more, I love Aaron Winthrop, and I'm promised to him !

GOD. And then, whatever I might do for her, I couldn't make her well off ! You're putting yourself in the way of her welfare ; and though I'm sorry to hurt you after what you've done, and what I've left undone, I feel now it's my duty to insist in taking care of my own daughter. I want to do my duty.

SILAS. I'll say no more. Let it be as you will. Speak to the child ; I'll hinder nothing.

GOD. Eppie, my dear, it'll always be my wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who's been a father to you so many years, and we shall want to help you to make him comfortable in every way. But we hope you'll come to love us well ; and though I haven't been what a father should ha' been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you for the rest of my life, and provide for you as my only child. And you'll have the best of mothers in my wife. That'll be a blessing you haven't known since you were old enough to know it.

NANCY. My dear, you'll be a treasure to me ; we shall want for nothing when we have our daughter.

EPPIE. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, sir, for your offer. They're very great, and far above my wish. For I should have no delight i' life any more if I was forced to go away from my father, and knew he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling alone. We've been used to bein' happy together every day, and I can't think o' no happiness without him. And he says he'd nobody i' the world till I was sent to him, and he'd have nothing when I was gone, and he's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me.

SILAS. But you must make sure, Eppie, you must make sure as you won't ever be sorry because you've made your choice to stay among poor folks, and with poor clothes and things, when you might ha' had everything o' the best.

EPPIE. I can never be sorry, father. I shouldn't know what to think on or to wish for wi' fine things about me as I haven't been used to. And it 'ud be poor work for me to put on things and ride in a gig, and sit in a place at church, as'd

make them as I'm fond of think me unfitting company for 'em. What could I care for them?

NANCY. What you say is natural, my dear child; it's natural you should cling to those who've brought you up; but there's a duty you owe to your lawful father. There's perhaps something to be given up on more sides than one. When your father opens his home to you, I think it's right you shouldn't turn your back on it.

EPPIE. I can't feel as I've got any father but one. I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him; I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working folks, and their victuals, and their ways; and I've promised to marry a working man as'll live with father and help to care for him.

GOD. Let us go.

NANCY. We won't talk of this any longer now. We are your well-wishers, my dear, and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It's getting late now. Good-afternoon.

[*Exeunt* GOD. and NANCY, R.]

EPPIE. Do you s'pose they'll come to the party now?

Enter MRS. W. and AARON, R.

SILAS. Good-afternoon, Mrs. Winthrop. I told Aaron to bring you over. You're always welcome. Get chairs for them, Eppie.

MRS. W. Well, Master Marner, you deserve all you got. When I look at you now, happy and contented, with a nice little home, I don't like to think of the little shriveled up old man who come sixteen years ago. It was a hard row, but you come out on top; I always said you would. With that tied to you, too. And such a pretty house!

Enter MACEY with GOD. and NANCY, R.

MACEY. Master Marner, I've lived to see my words come true. I was the first to say there was no harm in goin'; though your looks might be agin you; and I was the first to say you'd get your money back. And it's nothing but right-ful as you should — (*Looks at* EPPIE.) And I'd ha' said the amens at the holy matrimony, but Tookey's done it a good while now, and I hope you'll have none the worse luck.

GOD. And, Marner, you'd better forget what *we* said.

There's none in Raveloe to wish you better luck than Nancy and me.

SILAS. Ay, you people are might ——

Enter WILL., R., in rags.

WILL. Silas, Silas ! It's me, your old—friend. Can't you, won't you forgive me of the wrong I did you ? I've come all the way from Lantern Yard to get you to forgive me.

SILAS. Your crimes drove me from Lantern Yard. I hoarded up gold and put my faith in it. That was stolen, and my little Eppie came and now I put my faith in her. A happy old man can forgive his early enemies. You must join us with all these friends. We are giving a supper in honor of the betrothal of Eppie to Aaron.

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